

It's a Hot Seat for Pool, Who Advises 'Stay Cool'

By Carl P. Leubsdorf

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Rep. Joe Richard Pool, chairing the turbulent anti-Vietnam war activities hearings by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, likes to use the slogan "Stay cool with Pool" when running in Texas elections.

But the short, pudgy conservative Democrat has been on a hot seat trying to keep order amid applause, laughter, hisses and shouts in the sprawling Cannon Building caucus room.

More than 30 persons have been arrested in two days of hearings into the activities of groups that consider the United States the aggressor in Vietnam and have collected supplies, money and blood for the North Vietnamese and Vietcong.

"We're trying to help the American fighting man in Vietnam," says the 55-year-old Congressman who headed an investigating committee during five years in the Texas Legislature a decade ago.

Pool says he is trying to be "fair and square" when confronted with witnesses and lawyers who regard the hearings as an effort to stifle dissent in the United States.

The hearings concern legislation introduced by Pool to impose \$20,000 fines and 20-year prison sentences on persons who try to interfere with the movement of men or materials headed for Vietnam or who help the Vietcong.

And Pool is convinced the sessions are achieving their major purpose—to show that such anti-war groups as the May 2d Movement are controlled by Communists or organizations such as the pro-Peking Progressive Labor Party.

The 5-foot-6 Pool, who claims to weigh 225 pounds, is serving his second term as an at-large Congressman from Texas.

He was designated to run the current hearings as head

of a subcommittee of the HUAC by the Committee chairman, Rep. Edwin E. Willis (D-La.).

Willis, who suffered a stroke last spring, has been busy campaigning for the Sept. 17 Democratic primary runoff in Louisiana's 3d District.

Pool, too, has his political difficulties these days. Under a reapportionment decision, he is now running for election from the new Texas 3d District—the western half of Dallas.

He is being challenged by Jim Collins, who bills himself as a Progressive Republican and is seeking office for the first time. Pool says he is running scared.

Pool, married and the father of four sons, is an attorney from Dallas.

He authored a bill in the Texas House in the 1950s to outlaw lewd and horror comic books, and has opposed Civil Rights and much of the Administration's other domestic legislation since coming to Congress in 1963.

But he is a staunch supporter of the Administration's foreign policy. "I think President Johnson is one of our great Presidents — especially his foreign policy," he said after one Committee session this week in which a witness called the President a "murderer" because of the Vietnam war.

Throughout the hearings, Pool has left most of the questioning to the Committee counsel, Alfred M. Nittle. But he has been quick on the gavel and has leaped to his feet repeatedly to demand order in the frequently noisy hearing room.

"If there's no order in here, I'll have to clear the hearing room," he repeated. And he made it plain to the 450 Capitol Police and Federal marshals that those who disturb the sessions are to be ejected.